

May 8, 2013

The Honorable Ann H. Kobayashi, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
& Members of the Committee on Budget
City Council
Honolulu Hale
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kobayashi, Vice Chair Chang and Members of the Budget Committee:

RE: BILL 11 (2013) CD1 – SUPPORT FOR THE WEED AND SEED PROGRAM

I am appealing for your support of Bill 11 (2013) CD1 that includes monies to sustain the Weed and Seed program in Kalihi-Chinatown-Ala Moana-Sheridan, Waipahu, and Ewa/Ewa Beach.

Weed and Seed is a collaborative effort involving law enforcement, residents, non-profit organizations, community groups and private businesses that have helped to reduce violent and drug-related crimes in my community.

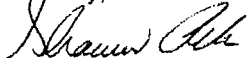
As the Chair of the Kalihi-Chinatown-Ala Moana-Sheridan Steering Committee, I have had the good fortune of being able to see first-hand how effective Weed & Seed has been in our community. Citizens are willing to join citizen patrol groups and are more willing to talk about what is going on in the community. Weed and Seed has been very involved in our community by coordinating citizen patrol training and walks with the citizen patrol groups, provides tools to support citizen patrol groups need (i.e. support from the police officers, flashlights, vests, t-shirts, etc.) coordinates and participates in community clean ups and graffiti clean ups with residents and volunteers within the community. (i.e. Pua Lane to Akepo Lane, Ala Moana beach park, Project Clean, Alokele to Kaiwiula Street, Chinatown, etc.). Weed and Seed conducts truancy sweeps/juvenile education and R.A.P. (Real And Powerful) sessions at Dole Middle School with select 6th graders and at Ka'ewai Elementary School with all 5th graders. Weed and Seed participates in keiki ID at Community events, knock and burns, etc. They also participate in community events (i.e. Kalihi Community Forum, Healthy Kids Day at the Bishop Museum, National Night Out, late night basketball at Kalihi Palama Settlement, S.O.S. (Save Our Streets), etc.).

Currently, Bill 11 (2013) CD1 has designated \$150,000 for Weed & Seed. My community humbly asks that the City Council increase that amount to \$200,000. Every year, Weed & Seed is instrumental in getting businesses, residents, service providers and community groups to "volunteer" their time cleaning up the neighborhoods and streams, participating in Citizen Patrol groups and organizing positive events and programs to strengthen our families. These efforts save the City & County of Honolulu thousands of dollars annually. The increase of funding will allow us to continue these efforts with the assistance of the Honolulu Police Department Community Policing officers.

Your continued support of the Weed & Seed program will ensure that community leaders and partners continue to build a strong network of committed citizens that will work toward preventing crime and growing strong, healthy communities.

I urge you to support the passage of Bill 11 (2013) CD1 with our recommended request.

Sincerely,


Shauna Okuda, Chair
Site 1 Steering Committee
Kalihi-Chinatown-Ala Moana-Sheridan